

October 6, 2005

The Honorable M. Jodi Rell
Governor
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

An energy emergency is looming as temperatures plunge and the cost of energy skyrockets. Immediate action is needed by state and local officials -- working with social service and community organizations, energy companies and others -- to protect Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens and to shield Connecticut's economy from the devastating drain of dollars caused by rapidly rising prices of gasoline, natural gas, oil, and electricity. I commend your leadership in bringing together such leaders, and heightening awareness of the potential problems.

I am proposing a three point plan that can be easily and immediately implemented as a first step toward addressing the impending crisis -- a measure that will help individuals and businesses through this winter as Connecticut continues its efforts to achieve short and long-term goals of energy conservation and efficiency. Adopting these initiatives will provide critical emergency assistance to low income residents who face the perilous choice of paying for food or heat and will reduce Connecticut's overall demand for heating oil and natural gas through an aggressive campaign of energy conservation.

Each year, more than 75,000 Connecticut households receive emergency assistance for heating oil, natural gas or electricity because they have simply run out of money. The annual demand for such assistance has been increasing, and this year could be catastrophic. Unprecedented increases in the cost of energy will strain more household budgets to the breaking point, while reducing the amount of fuel that emergency funds can supply. Clearly, more resources are needed to prevent our residents from suffering serious cold and financial hardship.

Conservation and energy efficiency programs must be significantly expanded, not reduced, as occurred in this current budget year. Working with a coalition of Connecticut industries, utilities, consumer organizations and government officials, we can make a real difference in people's lives and the state's economy by lowering our energy consumption and our energy bills and increasing our energy independence.

I look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Very truly yours,

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

RB/pas